

Ideas to utilize upcoming American Rescue Plan dollars
Washoe County will be collecting feedback until November 30, 2021

Through the passage of the American Rescue Act of 2021 (H.R. 1319), state and local aid will be distributed to States, local governments, and tribal governments in the same manner as Coronavirus Relief Funds (CRF) from the CARES Act.

Funds are required to be spent within the following categories:

- Response to the public health emergency or its negative economic impacts
- Response to workers performing essential work during the public health emergency
- The provision of government services due to revenue reduction
- Make necessary investments in water, sewer, or broadband infrastructure

Members of community stakeholder groups and the public are encouraged to share their ideas using the form provided below.

Required

1.Name

Age Friendly Livable Reno Action Group, Donna Clontz AARP NV Lead Volunteer

2.Email donnanorm1@yahoo.com

3.Zip Code

89509, 89519, 89523, 89431, and 89436

4.Idea to utilize ARPA funds within the categories listed above

Response to public health emergency and its negative impacts for Washoe County older adults; provision of government services due to revenue reduction, and investments in broadband infrastructure

Idea: Create and fund a new pilot project, Neighborhood Elders Together

Washoe County elders (aged 60+) have higher incidents of disease than younger age groups, including some of the highest rates of suicide in the US. During the pandemic, our elders have become more disconnected and isolated from others due to their fear of exposure to covid, lack of transportation, living on low- and fixed-incomes, and being less likely to use (or know how to use) the internet, smartphones and computers to connect with others or with services they may need. Many WC elders live alone and are not connected to family or neighbors, so there is a heightened risk of depression leading to poor physical and mental well-being.

We urge the County Commission to fund some projects that address these health disparities and combat isolation among Washoe County elders:

The Age Friendly Livable Reno Action Group (made up of community members/service provider representatives, as well as members of Washoe County Senior Advisory Board, Sparks Senior Citizen Advisory Committee and Reno Senior Citizen Advisory Committee) recommend creation and funding

the Action Group's idea to fund a 2-year pilot project (working title "Neighborhood Elders Together") to identify neighborhoods with large numbers of isolated elders (using Truckee Meadows Tomorrow's database), and to partner with RTC, N4 (Neighbor Network of Northern Nevada), and Washoe County libraries to transport small groups of these isolated/solo elders from the same neighborhood to the closest library to meet and socialize with each other, share refreshments, discuss their ideas and needs to improve their lives and neighborhood connections, try new activities they choose (such as yoga, exercise, how to use a smartphone, tablet or computer, how to access services they want, how to access affordable transportation on their own or with each other, how to use the library's resources, etc.). The goal for each elder is to make friends, form new social connections with each other and build a stronger community in their neighborhood to socialize and help each other when needed. These social connections would lessen depression and isolation, leading to better physical and mental health outcomes. The project would include support of activities they identify in their neighborhood that continue to grow their social connections.

Our Action Group has received verbal support for this idea from identified project partners such as Washoe County Senior Services and Washoe County Library System, N4, Truckee Meadows Tomorrow, HELLO/BUILD Health project, Center for Healthy Aging. Additional partners could include RTC's FlexRIDE, Senior Ride and ACCESS programs, Washoe County Mental Health programs and other local senior services providers. N4 and/or Center for Healthy Aging are interested in being the nonprofit applicant(s) for this ARPA grant and will supply some in-kind staffing, research and other support for the project. Possible funding categories could include hiring a contracted group meeting facilitator/activities scheduler to manage the project, fees for use of library and other meeting areas, transportation vouchers from N4 and RTC, office supplies/printing of flyers and handouts, equipment to teach elders how to use wifi/tablets/smartphones to access services, fees for activities and activities instructors, refreshments (coffee, water, healthy snacks).